

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
Ex 892 Raa

HOME IMPROVEMENT - ADVENTURES IN GOOD LIVING

LIBRARY
RECEIVED

★ MAY 14 1934 ★

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by Mary Rokahr, Extension Economist, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, May 2, 1934, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations.

Thank you, Mr. Teuton.

How do you do, Farm and Home Friends?

Today, I am going to tell you about two of the adventures I have had in visiting rural homes all over the United States. These homes have been improved through the assistance of the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant Colleges.

But first, no doubt, you will want to know what kind of work takes me to all parts of the United States. My job is Extension Economist, Home Management. I belong to the group of about 6,000 county agricultural agents and home demonstration agents who carry on an educational program on improved agriculture and homemaking with rural families. Specifically, I help plan programs on home management; the wise use of time and money; and the improvement of the house - both inside and out. Home Management covers everything, from how to help Johnny use his allowance wisely, to how to clean the windows in the most efficient way.

There are home management specialists in every State who help, as well as home demonstration agents and local women who act as leaders and carry practical ideas to their neighbors. Just to give you an idea of how many rural families these Extension workers reach - let me tell you that over 107,000 women improved the selection of their home furnishings in 1933, and over 62,000 - 4-H boys and girls completed home furnishing club projects.

But, we are getting away from those home improvement adventures. The first adventure took me to Connecticut, to the home of a most interesting family - mother and father - and seven children, all under fourteen years of age. They live in a house over 100 years old. The kitchen was so large that plans to remodel it included a dining alcove, and an entrance hall where the men could wash and leave their work clothes. The efficient, made-over kitchen had many step-saving devices, including a cupboard near the stove for storing cereals, coffee, and utensils used at the stove. The coat rack was ingenious. It was graduated in height, with hooks to accommodate the wraps of the different size children, and special places for overshoes, mittens, and caps. The homemaker was most enthusiastic about the time and strength she saved through the rearrangements, and the children were so interested in their improved kitchen that they did their daily chores, the mother reported, in less time and with a happier spirit than ever before.

A long way from Connecticut - down in Texas - one day I went venturing to see the results of a State living-room contest. This adventure took me to the home of Mr. & Mrs. Duncan. Mrs. Duncan had been inspired to join the Living Room Contest by hearing other rural homemakers, during Farm and Home Week, tell about their living room improvements. The Duncans had long wanted to add a new living room to their house but the expense was too great.

(over)

So, with the assistance of the home demonstration agent, they converted one of the bedrooms into a living room. Before the improvement, according to Mrs. Duncan, the young people gathering for a social evening were packed into the room like sardines. They had to sit on the bed that took up one side of the room. The radio was on a table and the batteries on the floor; an old dresser in one corner and a wardrobe in another. To transform the room completely, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan refinished walls and floors; made several trips to second-hand stores for a couch, a table, and a dresser that was fitted up as a desk; made rugs and pillows out of bran sacks; and built a magazine rack and sewing cabinet of apple boxes, painted black. Mrs. Duncan died curtains and covers and made the entire room attractive in rust and blue. The cost of the furnishings was only \$7.85. Hundreds of visitors who stopped to see this demonstration living room went home and followed some of the ideas in their own rooms. Mr. and Mrs. Duncan said their greatest joy was sitting down in their comfortable living room in leisure moments during the day, with the added pleasure of entertaining their friends in an attractive room in which they were no longer packed like sardines.

Adventures in home improvement reach every nook and cranny of the rural home - from indoor and outdoor living rooms, porches, kitchens and bedrooms, to efficient, well-planned storage spaces for canned and stored food, clothing and cleaning equipment.

Can't you visualize an outdoor living room - cool and comfortable for hot weather - which we know will soon be with us? The Southern States give us many examples of outdoor living rooms arranged with little actual cost. Knowledge, labor and initiative seem to be the most essential ingredients to achieve results.

If you want to go on some adventures, yourself, in home improvement, I suggest that you get in touch with your county extension agents. During this week, tours to improved homes; meetings and exhibits are being held in many counties. Or, perhaps you would like to go adventuring in your own living room, bedroom or kitchen? If you do - and want some help in planning - feel free to call upon your county extension agents. They will be glad to help you.